



Corsham Chamber of Commerce
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Delwyn Burbidge
Chief Executive
North Wilts District Council
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5 March 2007

Dear Delwyn

Proposed loss of free car parking period in North Wiltshire Towns - Corsham

Following discussion amongst the five Chambers of Commerce I write as the North Wiltshire Area Board Director of the Wessex Association of Chambers of Commerce to register our strong opposition to the proposal to eliminate the initial free parking period.

As President of Corsham Chamber of Commerce, Trade and Industry I am also writing with specific reference to the situation in Corsham.

Corsham originally had free parking and when it was proposed to introduce charging without any initial free period the Chamber conducted a comprehensive survey of the needs of the business owners, their employees and those residents who had no off-street parking.

The result of the survey convinced our District Councillors that this would be detrimental to Corsham and would drive trade to the supermarkets in Chippenham and in Melksham where free parking is available. As a result the Chamber supported the proposal for the initial hour to be free in Corsham with charging thereafter.

This has worked well with an increased turnover of spaces and very little difficulty in shoppers finding a space. There are still unresolved issues in connection with displaced all-day parking by employees. These people have indicated in the surveys that they would seek employment elsewhere that was better paid to offset the increased travelling rather than stick with the situation in Corsham.

The Chamber was assured that any income raised from charges would be invested in transport and car park improvements and was not seen as a general revenue source. There is no evidence of the beneficial effect of the income.

Meanwhile NWDC would develop a transport/car parking strategy in consultation with stakeholders, including the Chambers. This is being undertaken by RTA Associates but is not yet complete.

The first hour free policy is vital to the economy of a small market town and if a change is introduced it will have a huge impact on local shops, including the main supermarket in the town.

Corsham Chamber of Commerce urges North Wilts District Council to retain the one hour free parking in the town so that businesses, employees and residents do not suffer.

Yours sincerely

Ian Storey
President Corsham Chamber of Commerce/North Wilts Area Director of WACC